

WILD GOOSE TALES

WINTER QUARTER 2018



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President's Column



Dave Landkamer

Winter is hanging on tenaciously as I write this newsletter column, with snow flurries dusting our valley, night temperatures dropping below freezing, and thin ice sheets forming on quiet ponds. But spring is just around the corner as our northern hemisphere tilts increasingly toward the sun, and all of the vibrant excitement of nature's spring renewal is afoot; confused daffodils blossoming, restless bird flocks massing and passing through, and yes, plenty of mud. The fluidity of the weather reminds me of the inevitability of change.

A central figure in our Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges in this spring succession is the Canada goose, and in particular, the dusky Canada goose, the key species for which the three local wildlife refuges were established in 1964. Huge mixed flocks of these dusks, other subspecies of Canada goose, swans, and assorted ducks have decorated our refuge wetlands and fields all winter long and are now preparing to move north to their breeding grounds. Meanwhile, waves of other migrating birds are beginning to move toward the Willamette Valley from the south, to build their nests and raise their young here in our refuges during the approaching spring and summer. In addition to these long-distance migrators, some year-round residents that remain here through all of the seasons, including the over 50 mammal species that call our refuges home, such as black bears, otters, bobcats, skunk, mice, voles, shrews,

FRIENDS' MISSION

The Friends of the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to:

- *Promote the conservation of the natural resources of the Refuge Complex*
- *Foster awareness and appreciation of the Complex through educational and recreational opportunities*
- *Participate in activities that help the Complex achieve its goals.*

squirrels, mountain lions, deer, and beavers. The largest and arguably most magnificent of our local mammals is the Roosevelt elk.

My thoughts this spring turn toward our local elk for several reasons. Elk are, indeed, a majestic and fascinating species to see at our refuges; they have recently been the focus of some important Friends projects, and in many ways, elk provide an interesting lens through which we can understand the complexities of species and natural resources conservation. (ctd on pg 16)



Winter Wildlife Field Day Attracted Record Crowds

Wow! We had record numbers of people enjoying Winter Wildlife Field Day 2018! It is estimated that over 800 people came out to William L. Finley Refuge for the event! It was non-stop at the stations for four solid hours; many people were eager to take part in the activities. It was one big, wonderful, busy day. We all reached SO many people. Experiences like this have a lasting, positive impact.

This event has become a favorite throughout our community. Hundreds of people know about and look forward to Winter Wildlife Field Day. Calls come in months in advance, asking when next year's event will be so that the date can be saved. Our audiences are more diverse than ever, which is quite an accomplishment. There were at least five languages spoken on Saturday, and many Latino families visited. Efforts to make the event as welcoming and open as possible - and to reach more of our community - are working!

Samantha Bartling
Visitor Services Manager





Many Thanks to the Winter Wildlife Field Day Team!

Corvallis Audubon

OSU Bird Nerds

4-H OSU Extension

Benton Soil Water Conservation District

Chintimini Wildlife Center

Starker Forests

OSU Society for American Foresters chapter

Jeanne and Lena who oversaw the Nature Store

Welcome Table and Elk Station Volunteers: Dave, Cowli, Priscilla, Katie, Hasnah, Debbie, Carolyn Suckow, Azizah, Doug, Janine and Kris,

Walt, Jeremiah, Silas and Tyrone Our behind the scenes support crew

Damien, thanks for the support and impressive elk calls

An extra HUGE thank you to Visitor Services Intern Beatrice!

For taking on so, so many tasks....





Coming Events....

- April 7: Bilingual Nature Walk**
Caminatas de Naturaleza Bilingues
Homer Campbell Trail, 10:00 - 11:00 AM
This guided walk is a free, family—friendly event.
Este caminata guidada es un evento familiar y gratis.
- April 21: Earth Day at the Oregon Garden**
Our members will host an indoor information table with crafts for kids.
Volunteers will get free admission to the Garden
Contact Doug (doug.spencer@q.com) if you want to help
- April 23: Beyond Earth Day at OSU**
The Friends will be promoting our refuges, their ecological importance, and as places to enjoy.
Join us, and share your enthusiasm with the students.
Email Dave Landkamer (djlandkamer@yahoo.com)
- May 6: “Bringing Prairies Home” Prairie Tour, 1:00 - 4:00 PM**
Meet at the Benton County Fairgrounds Parking Lot. We will visit a few refuge prairies and two other off—refuge prairies. Reserve a spot by calling call 541-753-7208
- May 10: William L. Finley Prairie Plant ID Walk, 6:00—7:30 PM**
Prairie Overlook Parking Lot
Walk with plant ID experts through the prairie, identifying different flowers and grasses. Take home your little plant guide.
- June 2: Get Outdoors Day at Peavy Arboretum**
The Refuge Complex will have an outreach table with activities.
Sign up to take a shift for part of the day.
Contact Samantha Bartling at Samantha_bartling@fws.gov
- June 23: Woodpecker Loop EE Shelter Celebration**
Come celebrate our beautiful new Environmental Education Shelter!



Refuge Updates



Feb. 10: Volunteers, Ankeny riparian planting

Planting native plant materials throughout the refuges is an ongoing activity. This group of volunteers worked to restore a field near Rail Trail at Ankeny Refuge back to native riparian forest. They planted willow and spirea throughout the field.

Efforts like this literally make homes for wildlife.

Help wildlife and have fun! Help the endangered Willamette Daisy at Baskett Slough NWR

Our mission: We're planting 5,000 (yes, it's really that many) Daisy plugs to assist in its recovery.

When: We start Tuesday, April 3rd from 9 am - 3 pm and continue Wednesday, April 4th from 9 am - 3 pm. We might need to plant on April 5th, too, we'll see. **Help for whatever time you are able to give; you need not spend the whole day.**

Where: Meet at the Rich Guadagno Trailhead. The trailhead parking lot is on Coville Rd. in the middle of the Refuge. In Google Maps, if you type in Coville Rd / Rickreall, OR 97371 it drops a pin right at the trailhead.

What to bring: water bottle, lunch and/or snacks, gloves if you have them, and dress for the weather. We'll plant rain or shine.

RSVP: RSVP to Sam Bartling, Visitor Services Manager, at samantha_bartling@fws.gov so we know how many tools and gloves to have ready.

Our team: The USFWS Ecological Services Program, the Refuge Complex, and the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE)

Thank you for helping this rare species!





Our Native Prairies (Join the Finley Prairie Plant Walk on May 10 at 6 PM)

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/William_L_Finley/wildlife_and_habitat/

Oak Savanna (Upland Prairie)



<https://www.fws.gov/WillametteValley/>

The oak savanna is characterized by widely spaced Oregon white oak trees with upland prairie in between. These open spaces support native prairie grasses such as Roemer's fescue and prairie junegrass as well as wildflowers like camas, lupine and cat's ear lily. The oak savannas of the Willamette Valley also provide vital habitat for the endangered Fender's blue butterfly. Before Europeans settled the Valley, the Kalapuya people used periodic burning to maintain open spaces and prevent invasive woody vegetation from becoming established. The advent of European settlement initiated a prolonged period of systematic fire suppression. Presently, less than 1% of the original upland savanna remains. The refuge complex is selectively restoring these areas by removing

invading Douglas fir trees that will eventually overtop and shade out the oaks. In addition, oak trees and shrubs are thinned to maintain an open grassland understory. Management of these sites is accomplished in concert with adjacent prairie habitats and benefits rare species. Here are some threatened and endangered upland savanna species:



Willamette Daisy



Golden paintbrush



Kincaid's Lupine



Fender's Blue Butterfly



<http://chapter.scr.org/northwest/>

Wet Prairie

Wet prairies are characterized by shallow ponding of water on the prairie floor up to 6" deep throughout the winter and early spring. They are known for their mounded topography which forms low points that flood seasonally and create a unique environment to support a broad diversity of plant species. Once the most widespread habitat type on the Willamette Valley floor, intact historic wet prairie land today numbers less than 1% of its original area.

The largest continuous and intact example of this historic habitat consists of 366 acres found on the William L. Finley NWR. Due to

the rarity of this habitat type, many plant species native to the wet prairie are declining and listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, including:



Bradshaw's Lomatium



Nelson's Checker-mallow



Peacock Larkspur



Seasonal News

by Katie Bernstein

Here is the latest refuge news from Samantha Bartling, Visitor Services Manager

In the sky...

Spring migrants are early!

In late February some violet green swallows and turkey vultures returned.

Dusky Canada geese are here and will be headed back to the Copper River Delta soon.

Watch for more arrivals of spring migrants at all of the Refuges.

Snag Boat Bend hosts an especially large variety of spring migrants this time of year; birds passing through on their way north, to breeding grounds.

On the ground...

The Indian plum has been leafing out and the red flowering currant is already starting to bloom. Happy Spring!



Western
Bluebird



Coyote



Green-Winged Teal

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/>



Bobcat

Spring Sightings by Refuge Visitors

Unless noted, all photos are from
the Oregon Department of Fish and
Wildlife Website:
<https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/>



Rough-skinned Newt



Great Egret



Rough-legged Hawk



Northern
Shrike



Refuge Staff Reach out to Corvallis Elementary Students



On March 1st from 5 pm - 7:30 pm the Willamette Valley Refuges hosted a table at Garfield Elementary School's Science Night in Corvallis. The students and their families enjoyed trying to find the right habitats for their critter or plant and the elk antler was a big hit. The bilingual activities allowed a lot of folks to learn about the Refuges and many commented that they would like to visit. We love introducing more people to the Refuges!

Samantha Bartling
Visitor Services Manager

Volunteer Opportunities

1. **The Woodpecker Loop Project continues!** Let Samantha Bartling, (samantha_bartling@fws.gov) or the Friends know if you would like to help with planting, reseeding or developing curriculum.
2. **Join the Friends at their outreach table at the Oregon Garden on Earth Day, April 21st.** Volunteers get free admission to the Garden. Interested? Contact Doug Spencer (doug.spencer@q.com).
3. The Friends will visit the **Oregon State University campus on April 23rd** to tell students about the refuges. Come join us! Contact Dave Landkamer at djlandkamer@yahoo.com
4. **"Get Outdoors Day" will be at Peavy Arboretum is on June 2nd.** and Refuge Complex representatives will be there! Come take a shift at the outreach table, and then enjoy the rest of the festivities. Contact Samantha Bartling (samantha_bartling@fws.gov)



Planning a Fish Passage and Wetland at Baskett Slough

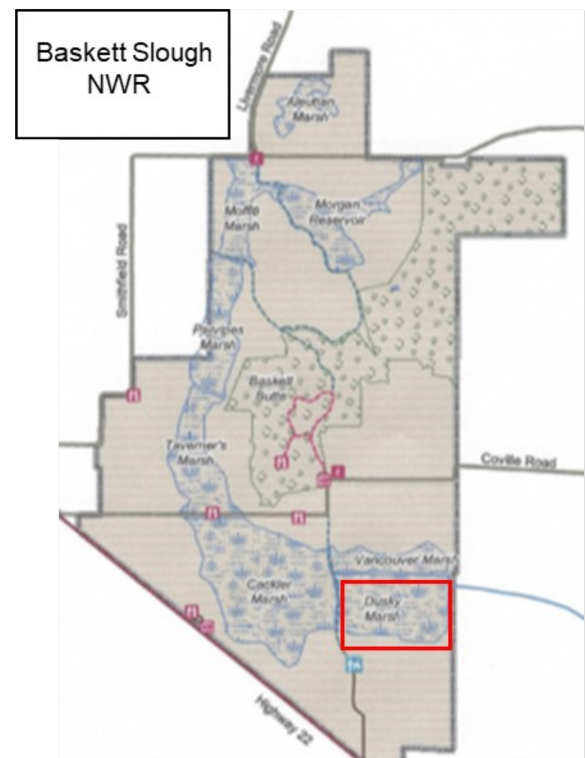
News from Graham Evans-Peters, Refuge Manager Ankeny and Baskett Slough NWR

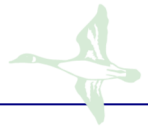
Staff at the Willamette Valley NWRC are in the early stages of planning a stream and wetland restoration project within Dusky Marsh at Baskett Slough (outlined in red in the diagram). Dusky Marsh currently dams Baskett Slough before the waterway leaves the refuge. This creates a 98 acre wetland that has high wildlife values, but it also presents a fish passage barrier.

The refuge's conceptual plan entails removing the Dusky Marsh berm on the east end along with the water control structure that acts as the passage barrier. Then we'll restore approximately 1 mile of meandering stream channel along the reach of Baskett Slough that currently flows through the marsh plus Harland Slough which flows into Dusky from the south. We'll also build a new off-channel wetland berm on the south side of the restored stream channel to maintain our base of emergent marsh. This new wetland will essentially be in the same place as Dusky marsh currently is, minus a riparian corridor.

Last, we will plant tens of thousands of native shrubs, willows, and other riparian vegetation along the stream that will eventually be home to beavers that colonize the area as well as a variety of songbirds like willow flycatcher, and maybe one day the rare yellow breasted chat. If we're lucky maybe it will be used by the occasional family of river otters too.

Overall, this effort is to ensure fish passage, but also to holistically restore ecosystem process and function that in turn benefits a variety of fish and wildlife species from waterfowl to fish, and everything in between. We are currently planning and fundraising this project so we're a few years out from implementation.





Wild Goose Nature Store

**Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday All Year
10 AM to 4 PM**

New Products for Children at the Nature Store

The Wild Goose Nature Store is flying high! At the March 10 Winter Wildlife Field Day, we welcomed over 250 visitors into our little store, the most ever in a single day! (But not all at once, thank goodness!) It was a busy day, and a good one.

We have added a few new items to the shelves recently. There are more things for children. In addition to the ever-popular stuffed animals, there are alphabet puzzles, spinner games, paper chains, even baby rattles. For budding artists, we now carry a nice set of watercolor pencils & matching sketchbooks.

Also new are a line of ceramic mugs. The company that we formerly bought our wildlife mugs from is no longer stocking them. Now we have a colorful variety of new mugs with images from mushrooms to elk.

As always, we carry an excellent selection of books for adults & kids to enhance the enjoyment of the natural world.

**Come in, browse around,
everyone is welcome!**

**Jeanne Taylor & Lena Proebsting
Co - Managers**





Celebrating 115 Years of the National Wildlife Refuge System



<https://www.etsy.com/listing/274368626/10-unused-pelican-stamps-37-cent-pelican>

This



Not This



<https://www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/07/15/422860307/hats-off-to-women-who-saved-the-birds>

In the late 1800s, the whims of fashion dictated that women's hats would be decorated by bird feathers. To meet this need, poachers hunted many species of birds to the brink of extinction. Concerned citizens, scientists and conservation groups found a champion in President Theodore Roosevelt.

Their concern about the rookery at Pelican Island on the Atlantic Coast of Florida inspired Roosevelt to use his presidential powers to protect pelicans, egrets, ibises and other birds. With the establishment of the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island on March 14, 1903, Roosevelt created the National Wildlife Refuge System. While in office, he would go on to create 50 more federal bird reserves and four national game preserves within the refuge system.

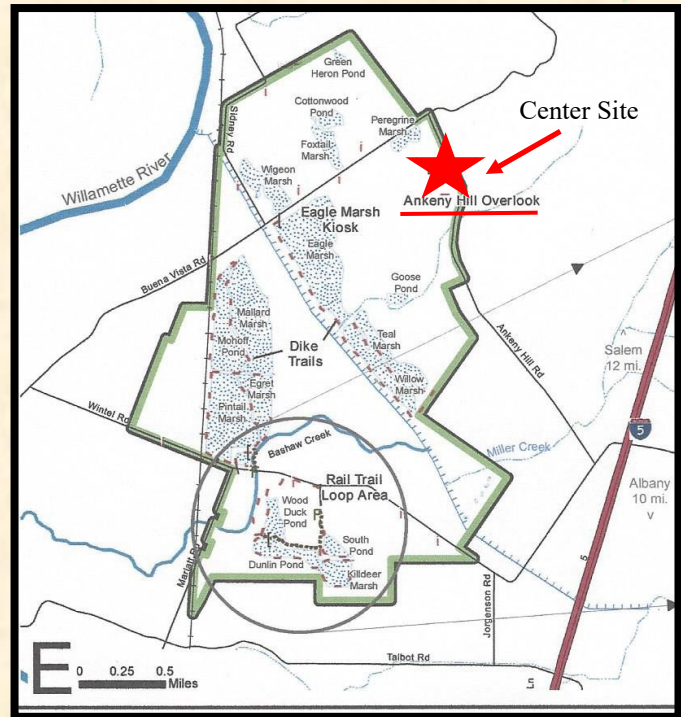
Building on that foundation, **the National Wildlife Refuge System today spans 150 million acres, including 566 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetlands management districts. More than 53 million people visit refuges every year, creating economic booms for local communities. These visitors generated nearly \$2.4 billion in consumer spending and supported over 35,000 local jobs.**



The Future Ankeny Hill Nature Center: An Update By Doug Spencer

The partnership for developing the future Ankeny Hill Nature Center at the Ankeny NWR Overlook Parking area has some exciting news to share. Recently the partnership, which consist of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Salem Audubon Society and the Friends of the Willamette Valley NWRC, contracted with Dalke Construction Company of Salem, Oregon and Carlson Veit Architects PC, Salem, Oregon to design and construct the first phase of this facility. The architectural company will design the entire building and, as funds are acquired, the other phases will be built, including the outdoor classroom at the Peregrine Marsh. Dalke Construction is planning to break ground at this site in July 2018. The first phase of this building should be completed by early spring of 2019. As this phase is progressing, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is planning to contract with an engineering company to design and build the parking area to this building and the new access road with lighting, signage and walkways and an automated access gate. Presently the Service is waiting on the funding before they can release the contract.

The first phase of the Ankeny Hill Nature Center will have an outdoor sheltered classroom and an indoor classroom with full service restrooms, storage areas and an office. The building will be a wood framed



building with a metal roof. Sustainability and energy efficiency will be promoted in the construction of this facility. Visitor Service Manager Samantha Bartling has been working with many environmental organizations to develop an environmental education plan that will be used for future visiting students. Volunteers from the Friends, Salem Audubon Society and the Service will be instrumental in assisting with the operation of this facility, which can consist in presenting educational presentations, guided tours of this area and the refuge, general habitat restoration and maintenance. To get involved, contact the William L. Finley NWR, Salem Audubon Society and/or the Friends of the Willamette Valley NWRC. Look to future Friends newsletter on the progress of this facility.



The Friends Engage with the Environmental Community



The 2018 Corvallis Sustainability Coalition held its annual Town Hall on the OSU campus on March 12 and we were there! The Friends joined 60 other environmental partner organizations in a two-hour resource fair that preceded the community round table discussion. Azizah Mohd, Dave Landkamer and I educated the fair goers about the refuges, promoted Friends memberships, and discussed volunteer and elk spotting opportunities with interested passers-by. Many people dropped by the table to tell us how much they appreciate the refuges and how they visit often. Most people knew Finley Refuge the best, so we distributed brochures containing maps and information of all three refuges. It was a positive experience to reach out to this audience. Their interest in sustainability and environmental issues made them a perfect fit for the mission of the Friends. Debbie Maynard

The Elk Bugle Stories from elk spotters in the field.

Submitted by Dave Landkamer

I was out driving the elk survey route along Bruce Road at the end of a balmy Saturday last month, when I pulled up alongside a late model white pickup truck going the opposite direction. We both rolled down our windows to say hi and chat a little. The elderly gentleman driving the other vehicle started out by asking if I had been watching the spectacular sunset of pinks, oranges and reds, and I replied that yes, I had. It was one of the most beautiful sunsets I could recall.

Then I asked the man if he had seen any elk that afternoon. He replied no, he had not. The last time he saw them was a long time ago when he was driving across the refuge with his fiancé. He explained that it had been the last time he saw the elk on the refuge, and also the last time he saw his fiancé!



Photo from outdoorlife.com



Wood Duck



Common Yellowthroat



Great Blue Heron



**Birds
of the
Refuges**

**Photographs
by
George
Gentry**



The pond near Finley Headquarters in Winter

Photo by Samantha Bartling, Visitor Services Manager



Lace up your hiking boots!

**All refuge
trails re-open
on April 1st**

(President's Message (continued from Page 1))

Seeing and hearing elk at our valley refuges is always exciting and memorable, especially because the Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*) that inhabit our valley, and much of the northwest coast, are the largest subspecies on the continent. Bulls here can weigh over 1100 pounds, with some in Alaska weighing nearly 1300 pounds. Elk are fun to watch throughout the year because they are active and in large herds of 20-100 on our refuges. The haunting bugling of bull elk is often heard in the fall and early winter. Soon the elk will begin to shed their thick winter fur coats, and the bulls will shed their antlers, only to regrow them during the next 4-5 months. In late spring and early summer, cow elk give birth to new calves which soon join the roaming herds. Elk are very adaptable and use a wide range of foods, habitats, and ecosystems. Two of the best places to watch elk at Finley NWR are the Prairie Overlook on Finley Road, and from just outside of the Wild Goose Nature Store at the refuge headquarters building.

For the past 18 months, the Friends have been conducting an all-volunteer elk survey at Finley NWR to gather information about the size, composition, and locations of elk on the refuge. The survey involves driving the refuge roads to stop at 12 observation points and record the elk sighted. Volunteers have watched elk herds moving through fog on Bruce Road, elk cows chasing off coyotes, and big bull elk challenging each other with their huge antlers and resounding calls. If you'd like to become an elk survey volunteer, please contact our Biology Committee Chair, Azizah Mohd, for more information. (azizahmohd@yahoo.com).

The Friends have also decided to feature elk in some of our spring outreach events, such as Winter Wildlife Field Day, the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Fair, Earth Day at Oregon Gardens, and Beyond Earth Day at Oregon State University. Elk are good outreach ambassadors because they grab our attention and capture our imaginations. These valuable events give us an opportunity to reach out to community members about the importance of our local National Wildlife Refuges, and how they can be enjoyed and supported.

Finally, the presence of elk in our valley continuously challenges us to think about and reconsider our conservation and sustainability practices. Humans value elk for a wide range of reasons, including beauty, symbols of wildness, ecological integrity, food, medicine and spiritual values, economics, and trophy hunting. For me, elk are one of my favorite ways of connecting with the vibrant, living, dynamic planet earth that we depend upon.

However, the range of values for natural resources like elk invariably creates conflicts between people and with the natural world. Where ever they live, elk can cause serious damage to agricultural field crops, orchards, and residential yards. Elk create mortal dangers to themselves and people when ever they cross roads. Elk are powerful symbols of the friction between our practices of wildlife protection and natural resources utilization (e.g.; development, agriculture, hunting, etc.). How do we accommodate and balance these different values across time?

It is estimated that 10 million elk lived across North America before 1500, from Georgia to Alaska and Massachusetts to Mexico, and that by the early 1900s, they numbered less than 100,000, just 1 % of their former population level. Today they live on less than 10% of the land they used to roam, and more people move into their habitats every year. Oregon has the third largest elk population of any U.S. state or Canadian province, behind Colorado and Montana. Will we continue to live with the elk in our valley, and how will we do it?

The Willamette Valley is a naturally beautiful and abundant place to live, which more people are discovering every year. The corridor between Vancouver, Canada and the Willamette Valley is expected to have one of the highest growth rates in the country during the coming few decades. The reality of human population growth here (and in most other places) increases the value and importance of our local National Wildlife Refuges, where protecting wildlife like elk, their habitats, and the ecosystems we all depend upon is a top priority. Your support of our refuges, our Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex nonprofit organization, and other conservation groups everywhere is more important now than it has ever been. Thank you for staying involved and engaged with our conservation efforts!

Membership Form

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Please check this box if you **DO NOT** wish to share your information directly with the Refuge Volunteer Coordinator for additional volunteer opportunities.

I am interested in these volunteer opportunities:

- ☐ Work Parties ☐ Special Events ☐ Wild Goose Nature Store
☐ Education Programs ☐ Board Member
☐ Habitat Restoration ☐ Grounds Maintenance
☐ Other _____

Annual Membership Categories

- ☐ \$10 Senior / Student
☐ \$15 Individual
☐ \$25 Family
☐ Volunteer*

All contributions in excess of membership fees are tax deductible under corporation guidelines.

\$ _____ Tax deductible donation

Please make checks payable to FWVNWRC.

* Please contact the Friends Volunteer Coordinator to see if you qualify.



Friends of the Willamette Valley
National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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**VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.FRIENDSWVNWRC.ORG**